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The Inspiration Of The Word



The Inspiration of the Word of God

A BRIEF ESSAY
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**"I have put my words in thy mouth,
and I have covered thee in the shadow of
my hand." Isaiah 51:16.**

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The term “inspiration” denotes the act of God speaking through man. The qualifying terms “verbal” and “plenary,” used in defining the accepted sense of the term inspiration, both signify one and the same thing: complete, comprehensive inspiration; but each serves to make prominent a particular feature thereof. The term *verbal* emphasizes that the very words are given by inspiration of God. And the term *plenary* expresses that both substance and form, both the internal and external Word,

are the result of divine inspiration. The terms verbal and plenary inspiration, therefore, signify that man was but the instrumentality whereby God spoke His Word and had it recorded in Scripture. Thus the Church taught concerning inspiration, ever since she began to teach explicitly about this dogma. To testify which, the Nicene Creed affirms of the Holy Spirit, that He "spake by the prophets." And the Book of Concord expresses and sustains its position by repeatedly quoting texts like St. Paul's, "Every Scripture is inspired of God."

W. C. H.

The Inspiration of the Word.

THE Word of Scripture is the Word of the Triune God. By the Holy Spirit, the Word of God is originated, perpetuated, and made efficacious. He communicated the entire Word, the internal and external. The Spirit caused men also to record the Word as it was inspired. For all time, the external Word is the exponent of the internal Word.

1. Divine Inspiration.

Jesus, in the promise made to the disciples of sending the Holy Spirit, reveals distinctly the source and origin of the Word of God. He says: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you." From these words, it follows that knowledge of the things of God, so far as at all made known, is revealed to men solely by the Spirit. And thus the Word of God, the embodiment of eternal truth, owes its origin to the Holy Spirit, whose plan and purpose—

the glorification of Christ—is progressively unfolded throughout the course of the divine revelation. Whoever the man may be, that at any time spoke of things divine, he was but an instrument through whom the Spirit declared to the world the things of God the Son in accordance with the will of God the Father. It was the sphere of God the Spirit to communicate the words and counsel of God to specially selected men. As the Spirit moved them, so did they speak. This communication or inspiration comprised the form as well as the substance of everything which was revealed. For the presentation of the great truth, the Holy Spirit did not simply originate the subject matter, leaving the choice of words to the judgment of the inspired person; but He gave the subject-matter clad in words and forms of expression chosen by Himself with perfect cognizance of the mental equipment and physical endowment of each one whom He moved to speak. Therefore, the internal and external Word together constitute God's revealed Word; just as soul and body in their united condition make human life. Accordingly, the entire Word of God is spoken by the Spirit through certain men.

Inquiring as to the manner of inspiration, it is obvious that only the work of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the inspired ones, can furnish the desired answer and information. If these two factors correspond, and if those qualified to testify by reason of having been the Spirit's instruments, corroborate each other's statements, then the matter is determined conclusively.

However reserved and mysterious the work of the

Holy Spirit is as a rule, yet there occurred several instances which make plain and manifest His mode of inspiring. The chief of these occasions was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day. The events of that day furnish clear and distinct proof as to how the Spirit communicates His messages. For, as the immediate consequence of the Spirit's presence and anointing power, the disciples "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." In many divers languages, they spoke, each as inspired by the Spirit. The people of the various nations represented in the multitude which had hurried together, were greatly surprised and marveled as they, every one in his mother-tongue, heard the men of Galilee speak of the mighty works of God; they all were amazed and perplexed at what they witnessed, so effectively and well did the disciples speak in languages of which they had no previous knowledge. It is self-evident that the Holy Spirit, speaking by them in other tongues, inspired both substance and form of what was in this wise said; since the disciples did not know and could not use the given languages, except when moved by the Spirit. Also the Judaic vernacular was included among the inspired dialects, though the majority of tongues spoken, were foreign. But whichever languages were used on that eventful day, St. Peter clearly includes them all as being given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus it becomes necessary to conclude that both the external and internal Word were inspired.

On two more occasions, the mode of inspiration became equally manifest. The one being when Cornelius

and his household were baptized by St. Peter; and the other, when St. Paul came to Ephesus and baptized the believers of that place. In each of these instances, like on Whitsunday, the baptized ones received visibly the gift of the Holy Spirit and in various tongues forthwith proclaimed the praises of God. Still another evidence of deep significance consists in the more abiding gift of tongues granted to various individual believers; whereby they were enabled to preach at will in other languages than that, or those, which they had acquired naturally. St. Paul, for one, claimed to have in special degree this gift of the Spirit of God. And as to the purpose of the Spirit in thus revealing His power, the same Apostle declares: "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving."

These occurrences illustrate the manner, in which God by the Spirit spoke through all the prophets and apostles. And the information supplied thereby, elucidates the personal testimony bearing on the subject. It is of great consequence, that where any claims in regard to inspiration are expressed, they are found to be to this effect: God verbally communicated what He wanted to have said. So, upon choosing him to deliver Israel, the Lord instructed Moses: "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." By David, the assertion is made: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." Jeremiah testifies: "The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." To Ezekiel, God said: "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with

my words unto them." And the Prophet, at another place, directly affirms: "The Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord." God Himself plainly testifies through Hosea: "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets."

Even the Lord Jesus Christ received of the Father by the Spirit the things He should make known to the world about the kingdom of God. Hence He maintains: "The words that I say unto you I speak not of myself"; claiming furthermore: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." And again, in prayer to the heavenly Father, He states: "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them." Of the Lord's apostles, St. Paul asserts with reference to the inspiration he received: "I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." St. Peter declares: "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the matter is stated as follows: "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." And St. John, in the Book of Revelation, repeatedly admonishes: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

A few incidents indeed show the inspired men to have been constrained to speak as instructed by the Lord. Balaam, for instance, said: "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" Similarly, Amos queried: "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" Jonah acknowledged to the men aboard the imperiled ship: "I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you," and he confessed that he had refused to go and preach what the Lord had told him. The Apostles, when ordered by the rulers of Jerusalem to cease preaching, declared: "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." And St. Paul averred: "Necessity is laid upon me: for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

These and many other Scriptural passages and historical facts, all supporting and explaining each other, abundantly prove the external as well as the internal Word to owe its origin to the Holy Spirit. The conclusion, therefore, which inevitably follows from the statements of Christ and the corroborative testimony of the Prophets and Apostles, as confirmed and substantiated by the events of Pentecost and similar occurrences, is that the entire Word of God was spoken by the Holy Spirit through selected men.

2. The Word Perpetuated.

The fact of verbal inspiration being established, it is incumbent also to consider the relation of the Holy Spirit to the perpetuation of the Word by writing. In order that future generations should possess a complete record

of all the revelations of God, which occurred in the course of many centuries, therefore the chief facts were committed to writing at the command and by the inspiration of the Lord. Speaking expresses the Word in temporary, and writing, in permanent form: the mode of inspiration is the same for either form.

It should be well observed that the Scripture, while having many writers, has but one Author; namely, the Holy Spirit. The variety of diction, style, and argument existing between the various books, indicates the manifold characteristics, differing vocabulary, and degree of maturity of the men whose talents and attainments were utilized at pleasure by the Spirit, when He moved them to speak or write. Whatever gifts inspired men may have had, it is obvious that He who made man with all his endowments, could use, for His own purposes, any and all such faculties which they possessed. Men of diverse standing, character, and accomplishment were chosen as the instruments of the Spirit, so as the more readily and fully to enlighten human understanding of every grade and disposition. Sometimes, also, the same truths are revealed through several contemporary persons, whose concurring testimony makes the more evident the inexhaustible depths and riches of the divine truth. Moreover, every soul commissioned to speak or write, received the measure of inspiration according as it pleased the Holy Spirit; and thus, whenever filled with the Spirit, each spoke or wrote as moved and directed.

The sacred writers received not merely the single words fitted to convey adequately the intended thought, they

received all and everything implied by plenary inspiration. This includes, then, the style of language as fashioned and formed by utilization of the talents of each writer. It is just as truly the work of the Spirit, whether plain language is used, as chiefly in narratives; or figurative expression, as mainly in teachings; or symbolical presentation, as mostly in prophecies. Furthermore, the kind of literature to which the individual books belong, is comprehended by the inspiration. All the books of the Bible, whether they be predominately historical, or prevaillingly doctrinal, or preeminently prophetic, all owe their character to the principle that produced the component parts. Likewise, the theme of each writing is not the writer's own invention, but the choice of the Spirit, who selected it for the special end it was to serve in harmony with the general object of Scripture. The sequence of thought in every book is always consistent with the particular purpose which the respective writing serves. The all-pervading great theme of Holy Scripture: God in Christ redeeming man—this theme, founded upon the account of creation; unfolded in the course of human history; and ending with the vision of the heavenly consummation—is a most convincing factor in proving the Holy Spirit the Author of the Scripture.

The beginning of Holy Scripture was made by the Lord Jehovah. It was on Mt. Sinai, when giving the laws and commandments to Moses for Israel, that God wrote on tables of stone the ten "words" or commandments. This occasion constitutes the inception of recording divine revelation in Scripture form. All the words of the deca-

logue were graven by the finger of God upon the two sides of the stones. The thoughts as embodied in the language chosen, compose the recorded words; thus God is the writer of the external and internal Word as impressed upon the stone tables. In later history, an event is recorded, telling how a hand suddenly appeared and wrote upon the wall in the room where King Belshazzar and his lords were gathered at feast. Self-evidently, that dreaded sentence was in the wording framed by the unseen writer; and to Daniel, whom the King sent for, fell simply the task of interpreting those words. Another very significant incident is the one mentioned by David, when informing Solomon and the princes of Israel concerning the building of the temple; at this gathering, he declared with reference to the plans and specifications, that he had received them "in writing from the hand of the Lord." By the foregoing facts, it is made plain that God not only gives the Word, but has power to record it, whether by His own finger and hand, or by the hand of an angel.

It is, moreover, amply testified by the Scriptures themselves, that the sacred pages have been written in accordance with the express will of God. When Moses stood before the Lord to receive the laws on which the divine covenant with the Israelites was conditioned, God said to him: "Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." In Psalm 45: 1, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer," the Holy Spirit is called a ready writer, using as His instrument the person inspired. The tongue of the

prophet by way of metaphor was the pen of the Spirit; since the prophet merely penned what his tongue was caused to say: the Spirit Himself gave the worded thoughts as they were to be recorded. A quotation from the writings of David is, in the Book of Acts, given with the introduction: "It was needful that the Scripture be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David." Isaiah was ordered by the Lord: "Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for time to come for ever and ever." And his book is quoted in Acts with the premised statement: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers." To Jeremiah, God said: "Take thee a roll of a book and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day." A passage from Jeremiah is given in Hebrews with the introducing statement: "The Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us." Habakkuk, awaiting an answer from the Lord, was first of all told: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it." Words as those with which Elijah began his letter to King Jehoram, "Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father," are, numerous paraphrased, very often met with, notably in prophetic writings. Such words serve to emphasize that God Himself has spoken what is there written. Though some of the Scripture books do not so plainly state that God ordered them to be written, they nevertheless, by their contents and relation to other books of

Scripture, prove themselves inspired. Furthermore, these books are included in the Old Testament canon; and they by that position have an attestation which outside books do not share. The very calling of such Old Testament writers as are mentioned in the Books of Chronicles: Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Iddo, Shemaiah, Jehu, Isaiah—makes it additionally evident that we are constrained to receive their writings as being inspired. Finally, these books are, like the rest, quoted and referred to as Scripture by the sacred writers of both Testaments as well as by Christ. That circumstance conclusively establishes any writing to which it applies, to be just as authentic as are the self-attested ones. For the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of the entire Word of God and who inspired all its writers, will not designate anything Scripture, unless it truly is Scripture.

Christ, when about to ascend to heaven, assured the Apostles: "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Whichever way the Holy Spirit might direct, they were in public to witness and testify. Their testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, in truth, was both oral and written; for the Spirit even already in former ages had moved men either to speak or to write, as He willed: and the words witness, testify, are relevant equally to the speaking or writing of what was inspired. Thus the Book of Acts says: "To him bear all the prophets witness"; namely, in and by their writings.

Jesus himself says of the Old Testament Scriptures: "These are they which bear witness of me."

Among the New Testament writings, it is asserted of St. John's Gospel: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true." St. Matthew's Gospel, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ," is distinctly a written testimony of the birth and life of Christ. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul says: "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord." And the Thessalonians, he addresses in the following words: "Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." St. Peter assures his readers: "No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." With reference to the revelations St. John had received, the Lord told him: "Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." The several New Testament writers who were not apostles, command equal Scriptural authority; because, being intimately associated with the apostles as their companions and collaborators, these men obtained exceptional qualification faithfully and precisely to represent the apostolic teaching and tradition of Christ. While not sharing the ordination to apostleship, they yet shared the inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Hence, their writings are

truly inspired, and apostolic as well. The tenor of all the before given Scripture passages is summarized in the words: "Every scripture is inspired of God." In themselves, the Scriptures manifestly bear the impress of their divine origin; and in relation to one another, each book more or less completely supplements and sustains the others.

So far, then, as the perpetuation of the Word by writing is concerned, the Scripture maintains convincingly it is the Holy Spirit who inspired the sacred writers of whatever century and generation. He is the great divine Author of Holy Scripture, from its inception on Mt. Sinai to its conclusion on the Isle of Patmos. While, in early centuries, minor particles and words have been slightly changed by frequent transcribing, still the text in the original languages virtually remains as it was inspired; and besides, the insignificant variations which did occur, do not in the least affect the efficacy and authority, which the Scripture ever holds by reason of its divine origin. Consequently, the Scriptures today, in the day of grace and fulfillment, are as truly the Word of God as were oral messages in the days of prophecy and revelation.

3. Efficacy and Authority of Scripture.

From the relation of the Holy Spirit to the divinely inspired and perpetuated Word, follows His relation to the operation of the same. The ever abiding efficacy of the Word becomes operative through the ministration of the Spirit. Where the Word of God is heard and re-

ceived, its inherent power works according to God's will and counsel. The external Word is the bearer of the spiritual power of life.

In many differing ways, the Word produces its effects within man: sometimes, like a seed, rooting and sprouting in the heart, or, like a leaven, pervading the entire soul; other times, like a light, illuminating the understanding, or, like a fountain, refreshing the weary; often the Word penetrates, as a sword pierces to the innermost, or it soothes, as a balm heals the wounds; again often, it strengthens, as bread nourishes the hungry, or it directs, as a guide points out the way that one should travel. In general, the Word of God is the touchstone of the human conscience through whatever varying conditions, relations and experiences a soul may pass during its earthly life. For such purposes as these, the Word was inspired and recorded in its Biblical form, to persuade mankind of the need of salvation and testify of the Saviour of the world. Comparing the work to be wrought by His Word to the results produced by snow and rain, God says: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

As regards the actual form of Scripture, it is true, the Holy Spirit was indeed entirely free to express the divine thoughts in whatever sort of words and constructions it pleased him; which fact is observable by noting the rendering of Old Testament passages in New Testament writings. Therefore it is unjustifiable to exalt unduly the

external Word: it is but the embodiment, exponent, and bearer of the spiritual, eternal, living Word; and all worship of the letter is of no avail. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life." Nevertheless, it is equally true that there is to the inspired, external Word of Scripture a finality which every true believer will readily perceive and duly reverence; remembering that God gave His Word once for all time. Moreover, he will clearly recognize that without the external Word the internal is unknown to mankind. And besides, the divine authorship of the Word precludes all irreverent dealing with the same on the part of any one who truly knows and treasures the Word of God, as the source and sustenance of his spiritual life. God also expressly commanded: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." "Not to destroy, but to fulfill," is the believer's privilege after the example of Christ.

The aim of all hearing and reading the Word of God should be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to ascertain the spiritual content of the Word. Only thus can souls come to living faith and the life hid with Christ in God; and only by keeping the Word do they grow in the inner, spiritual man. For, the Word of Scripture is the Holy Spirit's sole authorized means of producing and preserving faith and life in souls. (Devotional literature, whenever Scriptural, always aims to direct to the Word of God; never, to distract from it.) This Word, the authorized means of grace, is the basis of God's eter-

nal covenant, and the life-principle of the Church of Christ. Where the authority of the Word is lightly esteemed or ignored, because of worldly indifference or spiritual pride, there the Spirit withdraws and communion with God is interrupted or severed. He, surely, gave the Word that it should teach men God's way of dealing with them, and become the efficacious means of their salvation. Therefore, God and the Lord Jesus, the Prophets and Apostles, with one consent unanimously declare and maintain that the Word is to be heard and heeded by all the earth. All the blessings of salvation are bound up with the faithful use of the Word, and the curses of perdition follow from ignoring it.

God Himself exhorted the world ever by means of the Word. As the covenant people stood upon the threshold of the promised land, the Lord, in His final, great charge to them, said: "The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." And Moses, having delivered God's charge to the people, concluded by saying: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." When the mantle of Moses was placed upon the shoulders of Joshua, he was enjoined: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then

thou shalt have good success." King Saul, having been rejected because he disregarded and transgressed the Lord's instructions, was told: "To obey is better than sacrifice." Nehemiah, in recounting the causes that led to the tearful Babylonian captivity, says: "They dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder and hardened their neck and would not hear. Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets: yet they would not give ear." The great blessings of the Word are pointed out in the words of the Psalm: "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." By the writer of Proverbs, the Lord says: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee." In speaking by Isaiah of the new covenant people, God makes the stipulation: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." Of the Book of Daniel, God stated that, to people of future days, it would be a source of great

knowledge: "Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." In Hosea, the Lord declares concerning Ephraim: "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing"; and the Prophet says: "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him." Through the prophets, God remained in closest touch with the covenant people, for the purpose of exhorting, forewarning, and instructing them. Thus Amos declares: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." The written and the spoken Word of God was the holy tie that united the Lord Jehovah and the Israelites in the great covenant of old.

The statements of Christ plainly show the salvation of the world to depend upon the hearing and keeping of His words. Jesus holds this preeminent position, because He is the Mediator between God and man. It is attested already by the prophecy through Moses: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Moreover, God, in a voice from heaven, gave the solemn and supreme witness concerning Christ Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The words of Christ, which since apostolic days are perpetuated in Holy Scripture, are as truly His

words as any which he ever spoke in the temple, the synagogues, or the homes of the Jews; whether in public before the Pharisees and multitudes, or in private to His beloved disciples. This authenticity is vouched for by the fact, that it is the Holy Spirit who recalled the words of Jesus to the remembrance of the disciples: even the Holy Spirit who had anointed the Lord Jesus also; and of whom Jesus said to the Apostles, "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

All that would come to the eternal kingdom of God, need to hear and accept the words of Christ, as taught by Himself and His Apostles. How exceedingly important a matter this is, appears from words like the following: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.—If any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I am come not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." Defining the essence of the divine Word, Christ says: "The words that I have spoken unto you, are spirit and are life." Only they who search the Scriptures and believe what they set forth regarding Christ, obtain the spiritual life and being: "He that believeth on me—as the scripture hath said, from his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Persons who are truly transformed by the power of the Word, He denotes as "such as in an honest and good

heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." To oppose or decry the manifest power of the Word, is by the Lord characterized as sin against the Holy Spirit, regarding which sin He says: "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."

In this connection, it should never be forgotten how Jesus ever directed all persons to the Scriptures. The written Word is the rock on which He built. All the Apostles, too, recognized and revered the sovereign authority of the recorded Word. By constant reference and quotation, they plainly proved their teaching to be in full, logical harmony with God's Word of the Old Testament.

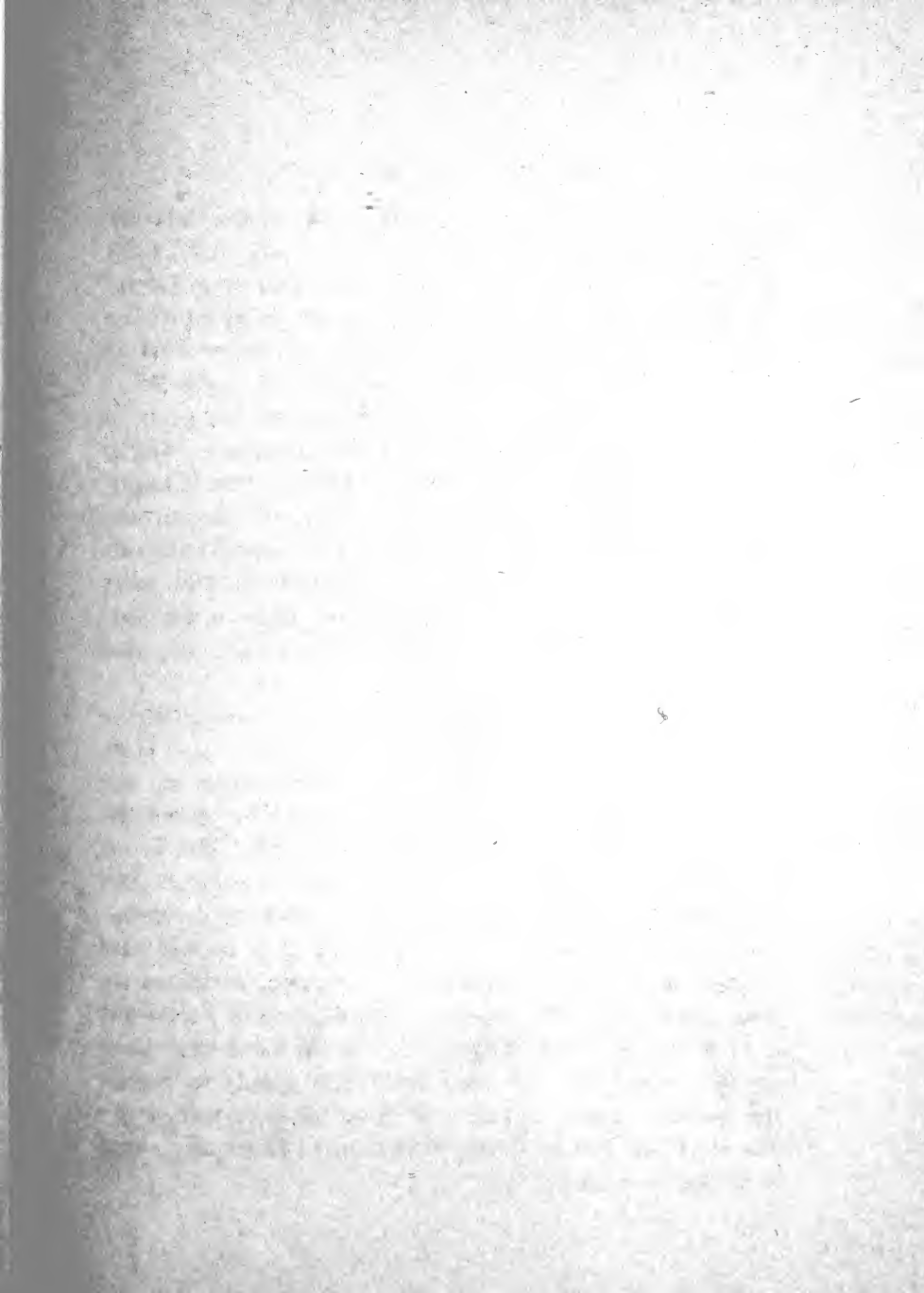
The Apostles knew the same efficacy and authority to inhere in the divinely inspired words spoken or written by themselves, as inheres in the divinely inspired Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, St. Paul declares: "We are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, in them that are being saved, and in them that are perishing; to the one a savour from death unto death; to the other a savour from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many, corrupting the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ." To the Thessalonians, he writes: "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all

the brethren"; and again, in the succeeding Epistle to them, he says: "If any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed." The Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them"; repeatedly the same Epistle admonishes its readers, "Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith: Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." St. Peter exhorts the brethren whom he addressed, to remember the Word of God, saying: "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles." And previously, he had said: "We have the Word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." In order to abide in fellowship with Christ, the Word must be kept, as St. John declares: "He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him." St. John says similarly in the Book of Revelation: "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the prophecy and keep the things which are written therein."

In truth, the Word of God is the inexhaustible power unto salvation and the perfect rule of faith. If any do not apprehend this power and perfection, it is for the reason that St. Paul gives: "But and if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the

god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." To all that hear and keep the Word, the Holy Spirit reveals its deep, true meaning. Indeed, the entire work of the salvation of souls is performed by means of the Word of Scripture. The key to the efficacy of Scripture is found in the testimony that it gives concerning Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the world. Quietly but tellingly, the Word operates in hearts to renew, transform, and sanctify the inner life of man. The more faithfully Christians will hear and keep the Word of God, the more securely will the Holy Spirit preserve them unto everlasting life. Therefore Jesus says: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

In conclusion, the Scriptures abundantly establish the fact that the Word was verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Prophets, the Apostles, and above all, the Lord Jesus Christ, were the inspired ones by whom the Spirit of God spake and revealed the Word. The Word of God as perpetuated in Holy Scripture, is as truly His Word as any ever spoken or preached under the divine inspiration of the Spirit. To the Word thus spoken and written, applies the exhortation: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord!" The efficacy of the Word is ever the same; till the great day of the Lord shall have arrived, when He will send forth His angels to gather the golden harvest. Truly, the Word of Scripture is the Word of the Triune God. "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."







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